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Immigrant social mobility: the determinants of economic success among Lebanese, Maltese and Vietnamese

Ian McAllister
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Abstract

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• migration represents a major disruption to a working career, with immigrants being reduced to a uniform level of job status in their early years of settlement, regardless of their inherited capital or individual achievements;
• while there are broad similarities in the patterns of social mobility between the immigrant groups, there are also significant differences, particularly in the impact of education and qualifications;
• for all birthplace groups, family inheritance is of lesser importance in determining social mobility than individual achievements, suggesting a high level of openness within Australian society;
• primary and secondary education obtained within Australia produces substantial rewards for a migrant's first occupation, relative to similar education gained overseas, but it is of little influence in determining later career jobs;
• possession of a recognised overseas qualification is equal to, or greater than, an equivalent Australian qualification in influencing the status of first job. But in the later career, it is the Australian qualification which counts;
• English proficiency is of economic value only to longer-established migrant groups, although the reasons for this remain unclear;
• Attitudes towards the nature of work are of considerable importance in determining who will do well in Australia in terms of occupational status, and who will not; and
• Family networks have only a minor impact on mobility.

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Immigrant Social Mobility: The Determinants of Economic Success among Lebanese, Maltese and Vietnamese

McALLISTER

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Immigrant Social Mobility: Economic Success Among Lebanese, Maltese and Vietnamese in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Equality of opportunity is central to the stability of liberal democracies, and one of the mechanisms through which it takes place is social mobility. Societies such as Australia, which have large proportions of immigrants, encounter particular problems in ensuring that the opportunity for mobility is available equally to all birthplace groups. This report examines patterns of social mobility in Australia by examining Maltese, Lebanese and Vietnamese immigrants, together with an Australian born control group. The data come from a 1988–89 national opinion survey conducted on behalf of the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The major findings which emerge from the analysis are as follows:

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- Family networks have only a minor impact on mobility.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Within modern, liberal democracies, equality of opportunity is seen as the core value which differentiates them from other societies. In turn, the ability to shift one's class position on the basis of individual achievement and merit, rather than on birth and privilege, is a crucial element in sustaining widespread popular support for the prevailing social and economic order. In other words, the opportunity to move within the system of social stratification through social mobility, as well as popular perceptions of its openness and fairness, is an important and enduring basis for social stability within modern societies.

Although studies have shown that family inheritance and socioeconomic origins play a significant role in determining social status across a range of societies, these studies have also found that individual achievement is at least as important as inheritance in determining class location (Broom *et al*, 1980; Jones and Davis, 1986, 1988). The situation becomes more complex, however, in a society with a large proportion of immigrants. With different, and usually less valued, socioeconomic and cultural resources, immigrants might be expected to do less well than their counterparts who have been born in the country. Although the evidence for this proposition is mixed, it is clear that newly-arrived immigrants have particular problems not faced by their longer-established counterparts (Jones and McAllister, 1991), and that those from Mediterranean countries encounter more fundamental problems of equality of opportunity (Kelley and McAllister, 1984).

If the opportunities for mobility are significantly reduced for immigrants, compared to those born in the country, the risk is that they will form an 'underclass' which is distinguishable only by poverty and ethnicity. This has occurred among many Puerto Rican groups in the United States, where long-term, structural unemployment is merely one component underlying a host of economic, social, and psychological problems (Hirshman and Wong, 1984; Trenda and Lii, 1987). Within this underclass, different socioeconomic criteria determine material rewards and, once caught within its net, there is little opportunity to break out from its hold.

This report examines the processes of status attainment among three immigrant groups in Australian society, the Maltese, Lebanese, and Vietnamese, together with comparative

results from an Australian born control group. The purposes of the report are threefold. First, it analyses the two traditional measures of mobility—intergenerational (father to son) and career (first to current job)—but it also examines a third measure of mobility, which applies only to immigrants. This is called migratory mobility, and it compares the individual's last job prior to migration with their first job in the host society. Second, in addition to providing results from a basic model of social mobility, the report examines where the person's education and qualifications were obtained, to measure their differential impact on social mobility. Third, we expand the traditional mobility model, which is usually based on inherited (family) capital and human (individual) capital, to include work values, family networks and religion, potentially important considerations in examining social mobility among immigrants, but factors which have hitherto been ignored in the literature.

Maltese, Lebanese and Vietnamese immigrants form particularly appropriate case studies for any study of social mobility in Australia. Maltese immigrants are representative of the earliest stages of non-English migration, most of them arriving in the 1950s and 1960s. Their departure was stimulated initially by fears of unemployment in the island of Malta, as the British government reduced its military commitment in the early 1950s (Frendo, 1988: 696). However, the cost of living, which rose eight-fold over prewar levels while wages only doubled, was also a major factor (York, 1986: 122). The Maltese, although non-English speakers, were regarded more favourably by the Australians because of their role in the Second World War, and because of their familiarity with British customs and traditions (Frendo, 1988). Currently, there are some 135,000 Maltese in Australia, representing 0.8 per cent of the total population.

The Lebanese represent a later stage of non-English speaking settlement, most of them arriving in Australia between 1967 and 1981. As with the Maltese, most migrated for economic reasons, but the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 have also been major factors (Batrouney and Batrouney, 1985: 85; Humphrey, 1988). Unlike the Maltese, who received subsidised passages to Australia, assisted migration did not play a major role in bringing the Lebanese to Australia. Price (1988: 124) estimates that there are around 124,000 people in Australia who are of Lebanese ethnic origin, although only about half of these were born in the Lebanon.

The third group of immigrants, the Vietnamese, represent yet a third stage in the history of migration to Australia. The arrival of large numbers of Vietnamese began only after North Vietnam took control of South Vietnam on 30 April 1975. The 1971 census recorded

only 717 persons from Indochina (Price, 1987: 9), most of them made up by tertiary students, the wives of Australian servicemen and adopted orphans (Kelly, 1988: 833). The number of refugees peaked in 1979, when over 12,900 were admitted to Australia (Viviani, 1985). In order to deter the dangerous boat trips taken by many refugees, the Australian and Vietnamese governments signed an agreement creating an Orderly Department Program; most of those arriving under the ODP have been ethnic Chinese, due to discrimination by the Vietnamese government, and the demand for family reunion with Vietnamese Chinese already resident in Australia (Kelly, 1988: 834).

All three immigrant groups therefore represent important case studies to examine patterns of social mobility among immigrants. All three have migrated at different time periods under different circumstances, from differing geographical locations, and have very different historical, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In a very real sense, they represent the wide spectrum of economic fortunes experienced by non-English speaking migrants in Australia.

CHAPTER 2: IMMIGRANTS AND LABOUR MARKETS

Two bodies of economic thought have guided theories of immigrants and labour markets.[1] The first, which is derived from neo-classical economic thought, argues that it is in the economic interests of employers to utilise the skills and experience of the labour force within a competitive labour market. For employers to do otherwise would inhibit the accumulation of profit and reduce the returns on the capital invested in the enterprise (Becker, 1971; Ehrenberg and Smith, 1982; Evans and Kelley, 1986). This approach has been more fully developed in human capital theory, which argues that individuals receive economic rewards commensurate with their skills, qualifications and experience (Jencks *et al*, 1972, 1979). In this view, therefore, immigrants are treated in the same way as workers born in the country: the nature of economic competition makes no distinction between them and provides little incentive for employers to do otherwise.

The alternative view is that immigrants are systematically discriminated against within the labour market because of their race and/or their ethnicity. However, scholars have disagreed about the precise processes through this discrimination comes about. One view is that significant social groups within the population exhibit racial and ethnic prejudice against immigrants. As a result of the pervasive nature of racial and ethnic prejudice, it leads to direct and indirect forms of discrimination which ultimately influence jobs, housing and the provision of government programs and services (Feagin, 1978). In this approach, prejudice and discrimination are largely a consequence of certain personality characteristics (Allport, 1954; Gordon, 1975).

One consequence of this perceived discrimination against immigrants is that there are higher levels of unemployment among migrants than among those born in the country, since the natural economic motivations of employers will be overridden by their prejudice. Another consequence of discrimination is labour market segmentation. Since immigrants will have difficulty competing within the labour market for jobs, they are forced into small enclave economies which serve their own ethnic community. These enclave economies offer

1 This section draws heavily on Jones and McAllister (1991).

fewer returns on skills, narrower employment opportunities and therefore reduced social mobility and greater risks of recurrent unemployment (Bonacich and Modell, 1980; Kringas, 1984).[2] However, since they are outside the national competitive labour market, their members are not subject to discrimination.

A second strand in this 'systematic discrimination' argument identifies the role of immigration within the capitalist system. In this view, immigrants are a 'reserve army of labour' who are drawn into the system during periods of economic boom to fill menial manual jobs; when the boom collapses and the capitalist economy moves into recession, they join a large pool of unemployed who must wait until the next boom arrives (Collins, 1988; Lever-Tracy and Quinlan, 1988). According to this theory, individual or collective acts of discrimination which may disadvantage certain racial and ethnic groups are less important than the strategic economic position of migrants within the social and economic system of contemporary capitalism. As Wooden (1990: 3) puts it, 'simply stated, ethnic divisions are seen as a capitalist strategy of control of the labour market'.

Obviously, there are wide variations in the predictions which these theories make about the role and position of migrants within the labour market. Human capital theory predicts few differences between immigrants: competitive market forces, so long as they are free of outside interference, will ensure that individuals receive jobs and monetary rewards commensurate with their ability, skills and experience. Although the alternative 'systematic discrimination' approach makes diverse assumptions about the underlying processes, there is agreement that lower material standards of living among immigrants are a consequence of the structural disadvantages they face within the labour market.

The level of social mobility among immigrants, compared to the Australian born, is an important test of these differing predictions. Human capital theory predicts that mobility should be related strictly to individual achievement: an immigrant and an Australian born worker with the same qualifications and experience should gain the same economic reward. The issue of qualifications, however, often involves assessing the value of those awarded overseas compared to those gained in Australia. In this instance, human capital theory would predict that those with an overseas qualification recognised in Australia should gain the same rewards as those with the same qualification awarded in Australia. By contrast, the systematic discrimination argument predicts that the processes of social

2 There is, however, considerable evidence from the United States that many immigrants, particularly those from southeast Asia, gravitate by preference to segmented or enclave economies. See Caplan, Whitmore and Choy (1989).

mobility should be less effective among immigrants, since they are systematically discriminated against by groups within the society and by the nature of the capitalist system itself.

CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL MOBILITY IN AUSTRALIA

Studies of social mobility have typically examined two types of occupational change (Graetz and McAllister, 1988: 186–7). The first is *intergenerational* mobility, or the degree to which sons inherit the class position and occupational status of their fathers.[3] This form of mobility evaluates the influence of inherited characteristics on occupational status; if a system of social stratification were based solely on intergenerational mobility, there would be no change in social location since individuals would recreate the class system of their parents. The second form of social mobility is *career* mobility, which indicates the amount of mobility within an individual's working career, usually from first to current job. It is assumed that inherited capital—characteristics stemming from the father—will be most influential in shaping first occupation, while individual achievement will be more influential in determining current occupation.

The major study of social mobility in Australia by Broom, Jones and others (1980) used a national survey conducted among men in 1973. They found that there was a high level of mobility, both from generation to generation and over the course of individual careers. Although they found that inheritance and achievement were of roughly equal weight in determining occupational status, they also noted that much of the influence of family background was indirect, via schooling, which in turn helped to shape the status of the individual's first occupation. This study found that intergenerational and career mobility differed between strata, so that those with a class of origin in the semi- or unskilled category were more mobile than those with a professional class of origin. These internal variations in the levels of mobility between different occupational strata have also been noted in other studies (Baxter, Emmison and Western, 1991: 45–7; Graetz and McAllister, 1988: 186ff) .

In a separate analysis of immigrants, Broom, Jones and others (1980) found that non-English speaking immigrants did less well in terms of occupational status and gained fewer rewards

3 Studies in Australia have rarely examined mother to daughter intergenerational mobility (but see Hayes, 1990), although this has generated a large international, mainly British, literature (for a review, see Graetz and McAllister, 1988: 187ff).

from their education than either English-speaking immigrants or the Australian born. Overall, however, they concluded that the processes of status attainment were much the same for the three groups once differences in social background were taken into account (p.46). Using the same data, Zagorski (1984: 106) concluded that immigrants experience greater levels of mobility compared to the Australian born, but that 'the difference between them and the Australian workforce is not great in these respects'.

Other studies have reached broadly similar conclusions about social mobility among immigrants (Chapman and Miller, 1986; Graetz and McAllister, 1988). Burnley (1986), for example, concludes on the basis of census data collected in Sydney that there is greater social mobility within Australian society than within the donor society, though this pattern did not hold for women. Other studies have suggested that although immigrants generally achieve the material rewards due to them based on their inherited characteristics and level of human capital, immigrants from Mediterranean countries may suffer some disadvantage within the labour market, although the precise reasons for this disparity are unclear (Kelley and McAllister, 1984; Evans and Kelley, 1986).

The results of previous research, then, suggest a variety of findings and hypotheses. First, there are clear differences between English and non-English speaking immigrants, although it is also evident that the processes of status attainment and mobility also differ between particular non-English speaking groups—mostly between those born in Mediterranean countries and other NESB groups. Second, given the personal and career disruption caused by the act of migration, we would expect that intergenerational mobility would have little impact on the job status of immigrants within Australia, and that their status would be affected to a greater extent by their individual characteristics, relative to the Australian born. Third, the returns to be derived from these individual characteristics would be less than those derived by the Australian born from similar characteristics, particularly where skills, qualifications and experience have been obtained outside Australia.

CHAPTER 4: DATA, MEASUREMENT, METHOD

Data

The data are the 1988–89 Issues in Multicultural Australia survey, which was a random sample of the Australian population aged 15 years and over. The survey over-sampled several overseas born groups, including the Maltese (n=509, representing a response rate of 67.6 per cent), Lebanese (n=554, 69.7 per cent) and Vietnamese (n=679, 71.0 per cent).[4] In addition to a control sample of the general population, from which we extract the Australian born (n= 1,070, representing a response rate of 61.8 per cent), these groups form the basis for the analyses that follow .

All of the analyses are restricted to men, since the processes of status attainment and mobility operate differently for women (Treiman and Terrell, 1975; Marshall, 1988). With this restriction, the numbers in the Maltese, Lebanese, Vietnamese and Australian groups drop to 254, 272, 402 and 509, respectively. Ideally, social mobility among the two gender groups should be analysed separately, but there were insufficient numbers of women within the workforce included in the survey to permit reliable analysis. Moreover, this task has been undertaken elsewhere (Graetz and McAllister, 1988; Hayes, 1990).

Measurement

The variables used in sections 5 and 6 of the report are shown in Table 1, together with their scoring and means for the four groups in question. Occupational status is measured by the ANU III status scale, which is a scale based on the prestige of occupations derived from

4 The survey was conducted in two stages, using the same instrument. The first, conducted by AGB-McNair, sampled four separate groups (general population, second generation, non-English speakers, and recent arrivals). The second, by Reark, sampled the particular birthplace groups. The birthplace samples used here combine respondents born in Malta, Lebanon and Vietnam who were sampled in both surveys.

the census (Jones, 1989).[5] The scale ranks occupations from zero to 100 based on the relative prestige or status of the occupation. Examples of occupations at six points on the scale are shown in Table 2, starting with door attendants and railway labourers, who score zero, and ending with medical specialists and judges, who score close to 100. The relative status of father's occupation, last job prior to migration, first job in Australia, and current job are described in the next section.

Table 1: Variables Scoring and Means

		Means[a]			
		Maltese	Lebanese	Vietnamese	Australian
Family Background					
Father's occupational status[b]	scale of 0–100	30.0	39.6	45.1	42.5
Father's Education	years	8.8	8.8	10.0	10.7
Education					
Schooling, total[c]	years	10.4	11.6	13.7	12.1
Qualifications, total[c]	1=yes, 0=no	.33	.28	.22	.49
Schooling, overseas	years	7.4	9.7	11.0	—
Schooling, Australia		2.2	.92	0.3	—
Qualifications, Australia	1=yes, 0=no	.18	.06	.12	—
Qualifications, overseas: recognised		.08	.04	.03	—
Qualifications, overseas, not recognised		.02	.06	.01	—
Qualifications overseas, not applied for recognition		.09	.15	.10	—
Occupation[b]					
First job prior to migration	scale of 0 –100	28.5	36.1	43.0	—
First job in Australia		23.5	24.1	23.7	—
Current job		30.8	27.7	25.8	43.4
Migrant characteristics					
Refugee	1=yes, 2=no	.00	.00	.86	—
Length of residence	years	27.2	12.6	4.7	—
English proficiency [d]	scale of 0 –1	.82	.59	.49	—
N		254	272	402	509

[a] Means are due for total samples only; in particular regression equations, restrictions apply.

[b] According to the ANU 111 status scale.

[c] Combines overseas and Australia

[d] Multiple-item scale combining reading, writing and speaking English.

Source: Social Issues in Australia Survey, 1988-1989 (AGB McNair total N=4,502 Reark total N=1,308).

5 This is a modified version of the ANU II status scale used in Broom, Jones and others (1980) and in a variety of other research in the status attainment and social mobility areas. The new version was necessitated by a change in the Australian Bureau of Statistics classifications at the 1986 census.

Table 2: The ANU III Occupational Status Scale[a]

ANU III score	Example of occupation
0	Door attendant; railway labourer.
20	Carpenter; vehicle body builder.
40	Shop manager; travel agent.
60	Computing professional; production manager.
80	Geologist; pharmacist.
100	Medical specialist; judges.

a Some status scores are rounded: for example, judges score 96.1 on the scale.

Source: Jones (1989)

The remaining variables used in this part of the report refer either to education or migrant characteristics. Education is divided into years of schooling (primary and secondary, but excluding tertiary) and qualifications, the latter a dummy variable. Preliminary analyses used more complex measures of qualifications, such as distinguishing between tertiary and non-tertiary qualifications and estimating years of post-secondary study, but they added little to the findings and were replaced with the simpler and more easily interpretable measures used here.

A major concern in measuring the impact of education among immigrants is where the period of schooling or the qualification in question was obtained. It is reasonable to assume that education gained overseas will carry less weight with Australian employers and therefore bring fewer material returns in terms of status and income; this has been confirmed by most empirical research (see, for example, Evans and Kelley, 1986). But as Broom, Jones and others (1980: 46) point out, this involves much more than simply where the individual's education was obtained, and it also brings into consideration social origins, English language skills, social networks, and a range of other factors which are related to where the education was obtained.

To take this into account, the expanded mobility model used in section 6 distinguishes between years of primary and secondary schooling gained in Australia and similar schooling gained overseas. Overall, the Vietnamese emerge as having the highest levels of total schooling, at just under 14 years, representing a schooling leaving age of around 19 years. This compares with substantially less years of schooling—12.1—among the Australian born. The Maltese have the lowest level of total schooling, at 10.4 years. The

Vietnamese are the least likely to have an Australian education, with a mean of around 4 months, while the Maltese average just over two years.[6]

An additional consideration is the problem of the recognition of overseas qualifications. In many cases qualifications are not recognised or not recognised at an equivalent level, and where professional bodies must evaluate overseas qualifications prior to admitting an applicant to the profession, long delays often arise. Among the three overseas born groups examined here, 19 per cent possessed an overseas qualification, of whom 6 per cent had sought recognition, 12 per cent had not applied for recognition, and the remaining 1 per cent did not consider it necessary. Among the 5 per cent who had sought recognition, 1 per cent had not had their qualifications recognised while a similar proportion had not had the matter resolved at the time the survey was conducted. However, among the 3 per cent who had successfully gained recognition for their qualification, a significant minority had their qualifications assessed at a lower level than the original qualification; this was particularly the case where individuals possessed overseas degrees or diplomas.

Among the Maltese, Table 1 shows that one-third had an educational qualification, the largest proportion among the three birthplace groups, but still substantially below the 49 per cent recorded by the Australian born. Just over half of the Maltese with a qualification had gained it in Australia. The Lebanese had the highest proportion not seeking recognition for their qualifications (15 per cent), a fact which probably reflects the technical or skilled nature of the qualification. Of the Lebanese who had sought recognition, more had not gained recognition (6 per cent) than had received it (4 per cent).

In addition to status and education, the expanded model in section 6 examines migrant characteristics. We would expect that those arriving in Australia as refugees would have significantly greater problems of economic adaptation than those arriving as migrants sponsored by either a family or by an employer. Families can provide a social network, thus improving the chances of early employment, while an employer provides a job on arrival. Among the survey respondents, refugee status applies exclusively to the Vietnamese, 86 per cent of whom came to Australia in these circumstances, many arriving via refugee camps in Indochina or on boats (Viviani, 1985). Gaining experience in a new country is a major resource, and to measure this length of residence is used. The Maltese have the longest

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6 Total years of education should equal the combined years of education gained in Australia and overseas. In practice, however, this does not occur, for two reasons. First, the estimates are derived from different questions and are therefore subject to error introduced by respondent recall. Second, many respondents, particularly the Vietnamese who came to Australia mainly as refugees, will have disrupted periods of education caused by the migration process.

length of residence, at just over 27 years, while the average Vietnamese has less than 5 years residence in Australia. At least partly as a consequence of their extended residence in Australia, the English proficiency of Maltese immigrants is almost twice that of the Vietnamese, measured by a multiple-item scale combining self-assessed ability in reading, writing and speaking English.

Method

The multivariate analyses are based on ordinary least squares regression techniques. They assume that, to a reasonable approximation, variables are linear and additive. In the regression tables partial regression coefficients (bs) and standardised regression coefficients (betas) are presented. An alternative approach would have been to use log-linear techniques, as in some other mobility analyses (see, for example, Jones and Davis, 1986). However, this approach, while often statistically more precise, is less easily interpretable, and for that reason traditional regression techniques are used here.

CHAPTER 5. SOCIAL MOBILITY: A BASIC MODEL

As we have already outlined, traditional studies of social mobility have focused on intergenerational mobility—a comparison of the father's occupation with that of his son, measured as either first or current occupation—and career mobility—comparing first and current occupation. However, for immigrants, the act of moving from their country of origin to the new country creates an additional form of mobility, resulting from a comparison of the last job prior to migration and the first job in the host society. This form of mobility is refered to as *migratory mobility*. These three forms of social mobility are defined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Three Types of Social Mobility

1. Intergenerational Mobility	Comparison of father's occupation with son's occupation
2. Career Mobility	Comparison of first occupation and current occupation
3. Migratory mobility	Comparison of last occupation in donor society and first occupation in Australia

Given that information is available not only on the occupational status of respondents at various points in their lives, but also on the age at which they held particular occupations, it is possible to analyse changes in occupational status across the lifecycle. This is shown in Figure 2 for the three immigrant groups and for the Australian born. The first and most striking conclusion from Figure 2 is the extent of the disruption caused by the act of migration. For each of the three immigrant groups, the act of migration results in a substantial drop in status when the last job prior to migration is compared with the first job in Australia. This ranges from a relatively modest 4 point drop for the Maltese to a substantial 19 point drop for the Vietnamese. In terms of actual jobs, this means that a Maltese craftsman might become a plasterer in Australia, while a Vietnamese civil engineer might start work in Australia as a metal fitter or tool maker.

Figure 2

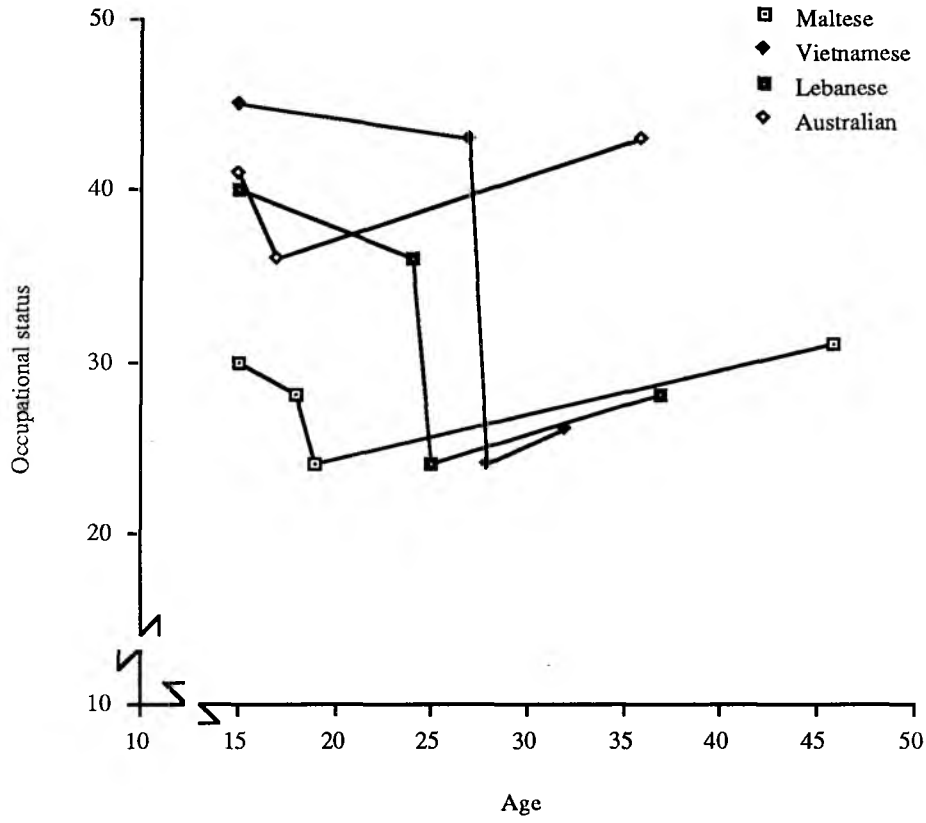

Figure 2: Social mobility across the lifecycle among Maltese, Lebanese and Vietnamese immigrants and the Australian born, among men only. Occupational status is estimated at the mean age when the occupation was recorded with the exception of father's occupational status, which is fifteen years for all groups. For the immigrant groups, the first plot is father's occupation at age 15 years, the second plot last occupation prior to immigration, the third plot first occupation in Australia, and the fourth plot plot is current occupation in Australia. The plots for the Australians are father occupation, first occupation, and current occupation, respectively.

Source: Social Issues in Australia Survey, 1988-89.

The disruption caused by migratory mobility is, then, a major one, and would appear to reduce all migrants to a uniform level of occupational status within Australia, at least in the initial years of settlement. This levelling process occurs regardless of family status (with the Vietnamese coming from considerably higher status backgrounds than either of the other two immigrant groups), and regardless of the age at which the person migrated. Indeed, the process would seem to operate in a similar way without reference to whether migration took place at age 18 years (the mean for the Maltese) or at age 28 years (the mean for the Vietnamese).

The second conclusion from Figure 2 is that the processes of intergenerational and career mobility appear to operate similarly for the immigrant groups and for the Australian born. There is a slight decline in status comparing the father's status with the status of his son's first job, ranging in size from 2 to 5 status points. This is consistent with the father having some 20 years of labour force experience to translate into occupational status, compared to no comparable labour force experience among his offspring.[7] Similarly, in comparing first job in Australia with current job, all the groups show a gradual improvement in their status, ranging from 2 points for the Vietnamese, who have the shortest period of residence, to 7 points for the Australians. In each case, the slopes are remarkably similar, suggesting that once immigrants are established in the country, their career mobility follows a substantially similar pattern.

The basic model of intergenerational mobility prior to migration is shown in Table 3, estimated separately for the four birthplace groups. As previously defined, intergenerational mobility is a comparison of the father's occupational status with the status of the son's first job; the dependent variable is the person's last job prior to migration. In the case of the comparative results for the Australian born, the comparison is between the father's occupation and the respondent's first job; here the dependent variable is the respondent's first job.[8]

In these and the results that follow, ordinary least squares regression techniques are used, which show the change in the dependent variable induced by a one unit change in the independent variable, net of the other factors controlled for in the model. The figures in parentheses are standardised regression coefficients, which show the relative weight of the variable in the particular equation. For example, the coefficient of 10.8 for qualifications in the Maltese equation suggests that someone with a qualification could expect to gain 10.8 additional points of occupational status (on a zero to 100 scale), net of other factors in the model. The equivalent standardised coefficient of .26 indicates that this effect is the largest among the four variables: for example, it is more than twice as important as father's education, with a standardised coefficient of -.11.

The results in Table 3 suggest that immigrants gain about the same returns from their inherited family capital (that is, their father's status and education) as the Australian

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7 Although sons are better educated than their fathers by more than 2 years, the gains to be made from this are offset by their lack of labour force experience.

8 This was considered the closest comparison for the Australian control group, given that the other alternative, comparing father's status to first job in Australia, involved a longer time-span.

born, with the exception that for Australians their father's occupation is the major influence, while for the Lebanese and Vietnamese it is their father's education. There is no statistically significant effect for the Maltese, although the same pattern holds. The lack of effect for father's status among immigrants may reflect the difficulties of accurately measuring status in these various countries. It may also indicate that the father's occupational status is less closely tied to father's education in these countries, so that the education of the father is the real indicator of the social standing, prestige and resources of the family, not the father's status.

Table 3: Intergenerational Mobility Prior to Migration[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese		Australian	
Father's occupational status	-.02	(-.02)	-.01	(-.01)	.03	(.03)	.11*	(.12)
Father's education	-.72	(-.11)	.88*	(.15)	.82*	(.12)	-.28	(-.04)
Schooling	1.2*	(.21)	.25	(.05)	1.0*	(.16)	4.3*	(.30)
Qualifications	10.8*	(.26)	10.7*	(.25)	14.4*	(.25)	8.7*	(.21)
Constant	20.6		23.5		18.2		-22.2	
R-squared (adjusted)	.11		.06		.11		.20	
N	155		199		242		464	

* p<.01, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's last job prior to migration. The analyses are restricted to those who had a job prior to migration and to men. Education and qualifications are those gained in country of origin, except for Australians. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

In terms of their individual achievements, immigrants do less well in their country of origin in translating schooling into occupational status, most notably among the Lebanese. Among the Maltese and Vietnamese, each year of schooling produces an additional one point of status, compared to over 4 points of status for the Australian born, net of other things. By contrast, the pattern is reversed for qualifications, with all of the immigrant groups gaining more returns on status than their Australian born counterparts. The results suggest that in the three immigrant societies examined here, completing primary and secondary schooling produces comparatively few gains in terms of job status. This is in line with economies which are comparatively under-developed, which have fewer opportunities to employ well-educated individuals. These immigrants can, however, significantly improve their status if they have possess a formal qualification which, for example, might give

them a technical skill or the ability to teach or join the bureaucracy. This is particularly the case in Vietnam, where a qualification could expect to bring more than 14 additional points of status, net of other things.

The combined effects of intergenerational and career mobility are shown in Table 4, this time predicting the first job held by immigrants in Australia. In this case, there is obviously no Australian control group since they have no equivalent measure of migratory occupational status. While family background has some influence in determining first job in Australia, it has comparatively little impact, with the exception of father's schooling among the Vietnamese. The major influence is education and, more precisely, qualifications. The influence of qualifications ranges from 5.3 additional status points among the Lebanese, to 8.5 status points among the Maltese, net of other things. By contrast, the occupational status of the last job prior to migration has a more minor (though in the case of the Lebanese and Vietnamese, still statistically significant) impact. Given the large drop in occupational status caused by migration, and the apparently uniform level to which migrants fall, it is perhaps not surprising that the last job in their homeland has comparatively little effect in determining the status of the first job in Australia.

Table 4: Intergenerational and Migratory Mobility to First Job in Australia[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese	
Father's occupational status	.06	(.07)	-.12*	(-.15)	-.03	(-.04)
Father's education	-.27	(-.05)	-.55*	(-.11)	1.0*	(.18)
Schooling	1.1	(.18)	.12	(.03)	-.52	(-.07)
Qualifications	8.5*	(.27)	5.3*	(.16)	6.3*	(.17)
Job prior to migration	-.01	(-.02)	.08*	(.11)	.12*	(.16)
Constant	9.9		28.0		14.8	
R-squared (adjusted)	.07		.02		.07	
N	241		222		240	

* p<.01, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's first job in Australia. The analyses are restricted to those who had a job prior to migration, a first job in Australia and to men. Education and qualifications are those gained in country of origin and Australia combined. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

The final analysis in this section examines all three forms of social mobility together—intergenerational, migratory and career—predicting the respondent's current occupation (Table 5). Comparative Australian results are presented for the two forms of mobility,

intergenerational and career, that apply to them. The results suggest a remarkably consistent pattern across all of the groups. As we have already shown, inherited capital, in the form of father's status and education, have relatively little overall impact in shaping the individual's current occupational status.

Table 5: Intergenerational, Migratory and Career Mobility to Current Job in Australia[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese		Australian	
Father's occupational status	.10*	(.11)	.08*	(.08)	.01	(.02)	.11*	(.10)
Father's education	.22	(.03)	.16	(.03)	-.09	(-.02)	-.18	(-.02)
Schooling	.16	(.02)	.22	(.05)	-.11	(-.01)	1.5	(.10)
Qualifications	4.8*	(.13)	4.3*	(.12)	5.9*	(.16)	8.8*	(.20)
Job prior to migration	.07	(.07)	.07	(.08)	-.03	(-.04)	–	–
First job in Australia	.30*	(.27)	.46*	(.41)	.68*	(.66)	.33*	(.30)
Constant	13.5		6.0		11.2		6.7	
R-squared (adjusted)	.09		.17		.47		.23	
N	246		223		245		465	

* p<.01, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's current occupation in Australia. The analyses are restricted to those who had a job prior to migration, a first and current job in Australia and men. Schooling and qualifications are those gained in country of origin and Australia combined. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 1.

Once again, the major factors are qualifications and first job in Australia, with the latter having the greatest single impact. In this model, qualifications are of reduced importance compared to the previous table, since their effect on current job will be mostly indirect, via first occupation. Moreover, among immigrants the possession of qualifications has little more than half of the effect on current status as it does among the Australians. The influence of the status of first job in Australia varies, ranging from .30 for the Maltese to .68 for the Vietnamese, and it would appear to vary by length of residence. For example, the Vietnamese have the shortest period of residence, and we would expect that there would be a higher correlation between first and current job.

The patterns of mobility presented here, using a basic model, suggest three major conclusions. First, migration represents a major disruption to a working career, with immigrants being reduced to a common level of job status in their early years of settlement,

regardless of their inherited capital or individual achievements. As would be expected from such a major disruption, the last job prior to migration has no effect on the individual's current occupation, but their job in Australia does have a significant impact. Second, while there are broad similarities in the patterns of social mobility between the immigrant groups, there are also significant differences. Particular birthplace groups therefore have distinctive experiences, which must be taken into account in estimating the mobility models. Finally, family inheritance is of lesser importance in determining status than individual achievements, a finding which also holds for the Australian born control group.

6. EXPANDING THE BASIC MOBILITY MODEL

The previous section used a basic model of social mobility to examine patterns of intergenerational, migratory and career mobility, defined as the status of the respondent's first job prior to migration, their first job in Australia, and their current job, respectively. Traditionally, models of social mobility have used a small range of variables, partly because of the limitations inherent in the available data, and partly because of the methodological problems involved in measuring occupational change over time. In this section, we expand the basic mobility model to include more differentiated measures of schooling and qualifications, as well as a series of variables to measure migrant characteristics. In section 7, the model is expanded further to test the relative importance of work values, family networks, and religion.

There is considerable evidence that immigrants gain fewer returns from schooling, qualifications and labour force experience which has been gained overseas, compared to the Australian born. Table 3 has already provided some confirmation of this from the survey data used here (for a review, see Jones, 1988). Beggs and Chapman (1988a, 1988b; see also Wooden, 1990: 30; Tran-Nam and Nevile, 1988) have shown that the discrepancy in translating education into status between immigrants and the Australian born is greatest at the higher educational levels. They argue that employers value Australian schooling and qualifications more highly than those obtained overseas, and provide employment rewards accordingly.

Based on these findings, we would predict that immigrants would gain more occupational rewards for schooling and qualifications obtained in Australia, compared to similar education obtained overseas. Furthermore, we would predict that this difference would be most marked for migratory mobility and least marked for career mobility, since in the latter case immigrants will have had more opportunity to establish themselves socioeconomically within Australian society.

Migrant characteristics are defined as attributes which will impact on the processes of status attainment and socioeconomic integration within Australia. Research has indicated

that those who arrive as refugees are more likely to be unemployed, compared to all other immigrants, whether they are sponsored or not (Jones and McAllister, 1991; Wooden, 1990: 24). Similarly, those with longer periods of residence in Australia will have greater job opportunities, since they have more knowledge of labour markets and job-search strategies, as well as greater familiarity with local customs and social networks, compared to newly-arrived immigrants (Wooden, 1990: 31). Finally, although the evidence on the role of English language proficiency in shaping economic success is mixed, particularly once a range of other factors have been taken into account, it may be that it too influences patterns of social mobility (McAllister, 1986b; Evans, 1987; Jones and McAllister, 1991).

Table 6 shows the impact of these additional variables in predicting first job in Australia, for all four birthplace groups. Since length of residence and English language proficiency are factors which stem from residence in Australia, they are not used in these equations because they have no relevance in predicting first job. The results for the Australian born are the same as those reported in Table 3. As we hypothesised, schooling obtained in Australia reaps considerably greater rewards in occupational status than do similar levels of schooling obtained overseas. For example, among the Maltese, one year of Australian schooling returns 1.2 points in occupational status, compared to almost one-tenth of that for a year of schooling gained in Malta. The results for the other immigrant groups are similar. Australians gain substantially greater returns on their schooling (4.3 points per year), even when compared to immigrants with Australian schooling.

Table 6: Expanding the Influences on Mobility: First Job in Australia (Migratory Mobility)[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese		Australian	
Family background								
Father's occupational status	.06	(.07)	-.07	(-.08)	-.01	(-.01)	.11*	(.12)
Father's education	.02	(.01)	-.58	(-.11)	.87*	(.15)	-.28	(-.04)
Education								
Schooling, overseas	.17	(.05)	.04	(.01)	.10	(.02)	–	
Schooling, Australia	1.2*	(.33)	1.2*	(.23)	2.0*	(.13)	4.3*	(.30)
Qualifications, Australia	4.0*	(.10)	.54	(.01)	9.5*	(.21)	8.7*	(.21)
Qualifications, overseas, recognised	10.7*	(.19)	13.5*	(.17)	8.6*	(.09)		–
Qualifications, overseas, not recognised	1.1	(.01)	6.7*	(.11)	-4.0	(-.04)	–	–
Qualifications, overseas, not applied for recognition	2.4	(.04)	4.8*	(.12)	1.9	(.04)		–
Migrant characteristics								
Refugee	–		–		-2.2	(-.03)		–
Length of residence	–		–		–			–
English proficiency	–		–		–			–
Constant	15.6		28.9		13.5		-22.2	
R-squared (adjusted)	.09		.03		.07		.20	
N	241		222		240		464	

* p<.01, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's first job in Australia. The analyses are restricted to the groups outlined in Table 3. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

Australians also gain more occupational status than immigrants possessing qualifications obtained within the country (though in the case of the Vietnamese, the coefficients are similar, 9.5 points for the Vietnamese and 8.7 for the Australian born). For example, Australians gain 8.7 status points for a qualification, compared to 4 points for an equivalent qualification among the Maltese and half of one point among the Lebanese. As we would predict, overseas qualifications return substantially fewer rewards in occupational status, with the exception of overseas qualifications which have been recognised within Australia: among the Maltese, these are worth nearly 11 status points, over 13 points among the Lebanese, and nearly 9 points among the Vietnamese, net of other things. With the exception of the Lebanese, all other overseas qualifications have no statistically significant impact on migratory mobility. The importance of gaining formal recognition for qualifications in the early years of settlement may reflect as much about the value of the

qualification as it does about the motivation of the individual in seeking to have it recognised.

The expanded model, this time including all of the migrant characteristic variables, is used to predict current job status in Table 7. As predicted, the differences between schooling in Australia and overseas largely disappear, except for the Vietnamese, who have mostly been in the country for only a short period. The initial influence of schooling on occupational status is largely on first job, and once that is taken into account (as it is in the model in Table 7) schooling has little direct effect. However, the difference between the status returns to be gained from Australian and overseas qualifications becomes more pronounced and continues to exert a significant impact, except among the Lebanese. It is also notable that overseas qualifications that have been recognised within Australia, which produced such large coefficients in Table 6, are now reduced to insignificance. It suggests that the career impact of such qualifications is limited; they may influence potential employers and enhance job status in the initial period of settlement, but not thereafter. At that career point, an Australian qualification is the only one which will produce material rewards.

Table 7: Expanding the Influences on Mobility: Current Job in Australia (Career Mobility)[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese		Australian	
Family background								
Father's occupational status	.14*	(.15)	.07	(.08)	.03	(.03)	.08*	(.07)
Father's education	-.20	(-.03)	.11	(.02)	-.19	(-.03)	.14	(.02)
Education								
Schooling, overseas	-.76*	(-.20)	.47*	(.13)	.33*	(.06)	–	
Schooling, Australia	-.53	(-.13)	.38	(.06)	1.2*	(.08)	.90	(.06)
Qualifications, Australia	9.3*	(.21)	4.5	(.06)	8.1*	(.17)	7.5*	(.17)
Qualifications, overseas, recognised	.13	(.00)	3.4	(.04)	1.3	(.01)	–	
Qualifications, overseas, not recognised	-.62	(-.01)	1.6	(.02)	-7.4	(-.06)	–	
Qualifications, overseas, not applied for recognition	.00	(.00)	2.3	(.05)	-.31	(-.01)	–	
Occupation								
First job in Australia	.29*	(.26)	.47*	(.42)	.66*	(.64)	.44*	(.40)
Migrant characteristics								
Refugee	–		–		1.7	(.03)	–	
Length of residence	-.04	(-.02)	.21*	(.09)	.56*	(.08)	–	
English proficiency	11.3*	(.18)	3.0	(.06)	-1.8	(-.03)	–	
Constant	18.6		1.7		1.4		8.2	
R-squared (adjusted)	.15		.15		.48		.28	
N	246		223		245		917	

* $p<.01$, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's current job in Australia. The analyses are restricted to the groups outlined in Table 4. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

Among the migrant characteristics, refugee status has no significant effect on mobility among the Vietnamese. Both length of residence and English proficiency show a reverse pattern among the three immigrant groups. Length of residence is most important for the Vietnamese in shaping current job status, but for whom English proficiency has no significant effect. The reverse is the case for the Maltese, with English exerting a substantial impact and length of residence no impact. The almost linear and reverse effects across the three groups for these two variables suggest three possible explanations. First, for newly arrived immigrants such as the Vietnamese, gaining knowledge about the society (as reflected in length of residence) is more important in shaping job status than improved

English skills. By contrast, once established in the country and having gained social skills and local knowledge, English proficiency becomes a more important factor determining job status.

A second explanation is that the Vietnamese (and to a lesser extent the Lebanese) form ethnic enclaves (Evans, 1987, 1989). Since the economic activity within these enclaves concerns particular birthplace groups, proficiency in English attracts few material rewards. Finally, there is some evidence from the research on the influence of English proficiency on earnings (for a review, see Stromback and Preston, 1991) that proficiency is not linear in its economic impact. More specifically, it has been shown that the income generated by a medium level of proficiency compared to a low level of proficiency is considerably less than that generated by a high level compared to a medium level of proficiency.[9]

The application of the expanded model to explain migratory and career mobility results in two main conclusions. First, primary and secondary schooling obtained within Australia produce substantial rewards for a migrant's first occupation, relative to similar levels of schooling gained overseas, but it is of little influence in determining a later occupation. Second, possessing an overseas qualification which has been formally recognised in Australia is equal to or greater in importance than an equivalent Australian qualification in shaping first job; in the individual's later occupational career, however, it is the Australian qualification which matters. Finally, English proficiency is of economic value only to longer-established migrant groups, although the reasons for this remain speculative.

9 Because of sample size restrictions in the data, it was not possible to test this hypothesis.

CHAPTER 7: WORK VALUES, FAMILY NETWORKS, AND RELIGION

The research presented here, as well as the results of many other studies, have shown that immigrants do less well in their socioeconomic attainments compared to similar individuals who have been born in the country (Duncan, 1969; Jencks, 1972; Portes and Wilson, 1976). In this section, the analysis of the factors which contribute to social mobility among immigrants is extended by including in the model measures of work values, family networks, and religion. All three represent additional possible explanations for why particular immigrant groups vary in their economic performance, even after the standard determinants of social mobility have been taken into account.[10]

Evidence from the United States suggests that recently arrived Asian immigrants have attained higher levels of socioeconomic achievements in their new societies than might be predicted on the basis of their family and human capital (Caplan, Whitmore and Choy, 1989; Hsia, 1987). Their economic success stands in sharp contrast to the economic experiences of other immigrant groups, such the Puerto Ricans and Cubans, many of whom form a poor, urban underclass. For example, measured by unemployment, job status and income, Caplan, Whitmore and Choy (1989: 52ff) show a rapid improvement among Asians with length of residence. Similarly, the children of Asian immigrants are disproportionately more likely to go to major universities, compared to the American-born (Bell, 1985; Hsia, 1987).

Although the Australian research is, as yet, tentative, there is some evidence that the Vietnamese, while experiencing higher levels of unemployment than other non-English speaking immigrants, perform better socioeconomically than longer established immigrant groups such as the Lebanese (Jones and McAllister, 1991). We might therefore predict that the same patterns differentiating the various immigrant groups in the United States would, in time, emerge in Australia.

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10 Part of this section rests on the research reported in Jones and McAllister (1991).

In explaining the economic success of the Vietnamese in the United States, emphasis has been placed on Asian cultural values, the structure of their family life, and the importance of religion in their lives (Caplan, Whitmore and Choy, 1989). In this section, these hypotheses are tested by adding a series of variables measuring work values, family networks and religion to the multivariate models used in the previous sections. In addition to testing their significance as explanatory variables among the Vietnamese, their importance among the Maltese, Lebanese and the Australian born control group are also examined.

A variety of studies have shown that work values are important in determining job satisfaction (Gruenberg, 1980; Herzberg *et al*, 1957, 1959; Kalleberg, 1977; Russell, 1976; Vroom, 1964), which in turn contributes to socioeconomic achievements (Maehr and Nicholls, 1980; McClelland and Winter, 1969) and, presumably, to employability. Although work values have been conceptualised in a variety of ways, the most influential has been the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic orientation made by Herzberg and his associates (1959). Although it has been criticised on a number of conceptual and empirical grounds (Kalleberg, 1977), research has shown that it is a robust and important distinction in identifying individual orientations towards work (De Vaus and McAllister, 1991; Locke, 1976).

In their analysis of the relationship between cultural values and socioeconomic achievements among Asian immigrants, Caplan, Whitmore and Choy (1989: 42) argue that Asian culture consists of three core values: education and achievement; family cohesion; and hard work. Each of these interact, they argue, to form a cultural framework within which socioeconomic success is achieved. When Caplan, Whitmore and Choy asked their respondent's to rank 26 values, 'education and achievement' were placed first, and 'hard work' third. By contrast, the 'desire for material possessions' and 'to seek fun and excitement' were ranked 25th and 26th, respectively. This shows that Asians make a very clear distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic work orientations in their own system of values.[11]

The survey asked respondents to rate the importance of 10 attributes associated with work, five of them measuring intrinsic values, five extrinsic values. The proportions responding to individual items and the results of a factor analysis of the measures are shown in Table 8, by birthplace. The factor loadings for the Australian born show that respondents make a

11 This is also confirmed in the factor analysis of the eight work value items included in the scales, which showed a clear differentiation between extrinsic and intrinsic work interests.

clear distinction between the two values. The five extrinsic values are grouped together, including good hours, holidays and job security, while the five intrinsic values cover attributes such as initiative, achievement, and responsibility. Among the extrinsic values, pay and job security are the most highly rated (79 and 76 per cent, respectively), while not too much pressure is considered less desirable, with support from 34 per cent of the respondents. All the intrinsic values receive a high level of endorsement, notably interest (81 per cent), achievement (79 per cent) and initiative (78 per cent).

Table 8: Work Values[a]

	(Per cent agree)				Factor loadings[b]							
					Australian		Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese	
	Australian	Maltese	Lebanese	Vietnamese	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Extrinsic values												
1. Good hours	57	59	55	55	.79	.08	.33	.66	.23	.74	.64	.42
2. Good holidays	48	52	47	49	.76	.28	.38	.63	.24	.68	.47	.55
3. Not too much pressure	34	47	40	54	.70	-.03	.18	.70	.38	.34	.70	.00
4. Good pay	79	88	76	72	.54	.17	-.01	.58	-.16	.68	-.01	.80
5. Good job security	76	73	60	68	.50	.12	.55	.26	.33	.60	.60	.26
Intrinsic values												
6. Opportunity to use initiative	78	43	41	51	.01	.80	.60	.32	.72	.28	.57	.44
7. Achieve something	79	47	50	50	-.07	.73	.69	.17	.79	.05	.50	.51
8. A responsible job	70	43	52	50	.30	.60	.76	.06	.41	.46	.54	.49
9. A job that is interesting	81	59	49	60	.25	.56	.60	.25	.59	.36	.30	.70
10. A job that meets abilities	58	45	50	60	.41	.52	.73	.08	.78	.02	.70	.18
Eigenvalue					3.3	1.5	3.8	1.0	3.7	1.3	3.8	1.0
Variance explained					33	15	38	10	37	13	38	10

a The exact question was: 'I would like you to tell me which of these aspects you personally think are important in a job. Which others?'
b Varimax rotated factor loading from a principal components factor analysis with unities in the main diagonal.

Source: As for Table 2.

In comparing the distribution of support for these job attributes across the four birthplace groups, the most striking observation is the consistently low level of immigrant support for the intrinsic values. This is particularly the case for initiative, which is supported by 78 per cent of Australians but only 45 per cent of immigrants, but there is a similar pattern for achievement, responsibility and interest. In part, this difference may be a reaction to the lower status jobs carried out by immigrants, or it may represent a genuine cultural difference in approach to work. There are considerably few differences between the Australian born and immigrants on the extrinsic measures, although 'not too much pressure' is rated higher by immigrants, while job security is rated lower.

The factor analyses for each of the immigrant groups in Table 8 show the underlying structure of the patterns of work values. The pattern is clearest among the Maltese, the longest resident group, who display the extrinsic/intrinsic distinction, although the order in which the factors emerge is reversed and one item—'good job security'—emerges as an intrinsic, rather than an extrinsic, value. The pattern is least clear for the Vietnamese, where there are several cross-loadings between the factors; here, though, as with the other groups, the basic pattern of an extrinsic/intrinsic distinction can be identified. From the factor analyses, two separate scales are derived to measure these two dimensions of work values.

Most immigrants have a stronger sense of family values than the Australian born. For example, the Maltese consider social structure to be based firmly on the family (Chetchui, 1986: 69). Family networks are measured here by whether or not one or both the respondent's parents were living in Australia, and by the presence of one or more siblings in Australia (Table 9).[12] As we would expect by their shorter length of residence and by the circumstances of their arrival, the Vietnamese have significantly fewer parents or siblings in Australia. In part, this is because many will have fled the country without their families; in part, also, it reflects the fact that they will have had less time to organise the entry of their parents or siblings into Australia through the family reunion program. In all, 78 per cent of the Vietnamese respondents did not have either of their parents living in Australia, while 42 per cent had no siblings here. By contrast, around one quarter of the Maltese and Lebanese immigrants had both of their parents in Australia, and around half had three or more siblings.

12 Respondents whose parents were dead or who had no siblings were scored zero, along with those whose parents were alive or whose siblings were resident outside Australia.

Table 9: Family Networks and Religious Values

	(Per cent) Malta	Lebanon	Vietnam	Australia
Parents alive and in Australia				
Both in Australia	23	22	12	na
One only in Australia	13	18	10	na
Neither in Australia	64	60	78	na
Total	100	100	100	
(N)	(254)	(272)	(402)	
Siblings in Australia				
Three or more in Australia	51	48	25	na
One or two in Australia	28	30	33	na
None in Australia	21	22	42	na
Total	100	100	100	
(N)	(254)	(272)	(402)	
Importance of religions [a]				
Very important	48	78	42	16
Important	35	12	25	32
Not very important	11	4	11	15
Not at all important	6	6	22	37
Total	100	100	100	
(N)	(254)	(270)	(402)	(509)
Religious denomination[b]				
Catholic	94	22	25	21
Buddhist	0	0	44	1
Muslim	0	51	0	0
Other/none	6	27	31	78
Total	100	100	100	100
N	254	272	402	509

a The exact question was 'Do you personally feel that your religion or faith is ...?'

b The denomination question was preceded by a filter asking 'Do you think of yourself as having a religion or faith? What religion or faith is that?'

Source: As for Table 2.

We would expect that immigrants whose parents and/or siblings lived in Australia would experience more rapid migratory and career mobility, since their family would act as a social network to enable them to seek suitable employment. At the very least, such a network would help them to obtain a job in the early years of settlement, even if the job was considerably below their skills and expectations. An alternative hypothesis, however, might suggest that the presence of family networks within Australia, and the accompanying social and financial support, might reduce the motivation to find a job commensurate with skills and experience. For example, if parents were prepared to provide

accommodation and food, this might reduce the incentive to find a job which would be sufficiently well paid.

Finally, religion is represented by whether or not respondents reported that religion was of importance to them in their lives, and by religious denomination. In Table 9, religion emerges as being of considerable importance to immigrants; for example, no less than 78 per cent of the Lebanese reported that it was 'very important', compared to 48 per cent of the Maltese and 42 per cent of the Vietnamese. By contrast, only 16 per cent of the Australian control group fell into this category. In terms of denominational affiliation, the Maltese are overwhelmingly Catholic, while the largest groups within the Lebanese and Vietnamese communities are Muslim and Buddhist, respectively, although both count significant numbers of Catholics within their ranks. We might expect those who reported stronger religious commitment and a denominational affiliation to experience more rapid mobility, compared to those with less religious commitment, as a result either of the networks available to them through religious activity, or by a stronger motivation to work, founded on religious belief.[13]

To test these hypotheses, regression equations are estimated predicting first job in Australia (migratory mobility) and current job (career mobility). As in the previous analyses, estimates are restricted to those who had jobs at those time points. The scoring of the new variables are shown in Table 10, together with their means for the three birthplace groups. Based on the importance of the variables in the basic and expanded models, control variables are included for father's occupation, schooling, qualifications, refugee status (for Vietnamese only), length of residence, and English proficiency.[14]

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13 Because religious activity, such as church attendance, would create a major social network, we use Catholic as the dummy variable rather than any other religion, since it involves a high level of observance within a social setting. Other religions, such as Buddhism, mainly involve personal or family observance.

14 In preliminary analyses, the complete range of control variables relating to education and family background were included. However, most had little effect on mobility. For parsimony, and also to preserve degrees of freedom, all but those listed here were excluded from the final analyses reported in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 10: Variables, Scoring and Means

		Means[a]		
		Maltese	Lebanese	Vietnamese
Work values[b]				
Intrinsic)	From a low of 0 to a high of 10	5.2	5.3	5.5
Extrinsic)		6.4	5.7	6.0
Family networks				
Parents in Australia	1=both, .5=one only, 0=none	.29	.30	.13
Siblings in Australia	Number	3.2	3.2	1.7
Religious values				
Importance of religion	1=very, .67=fairly, .33=not very, 0=not at all	.76	.89	.64
Catholic)		.94	na	na
Muslim)	1=yes, 0=no	na	.51	na
Buddhist)		na	na	.46
N		246	240	245

a Means are for total samples only; in particular regression equations, restrictions apply.

b See text for details of scales and scale construction.

Source: As for Table 2.

The results for migratory mobility (that is, first job in Australia) are shown in Table 11. The proportion of the variance explained (R-squared) indicates that the models have relatively little impact in explaining the status of first job in Australia. However, most of the variables influence mobility as hypothesised. Higher intrinsic work values are more likely to increase the status of first job, while higher extrinsic values reduce status; although none of the variables attain statistical significance, the pattern is consistent across the three birthplace groups.[15] The presence of parents in Australia is also likely to increase status, particularly among the Vietnamese (increasing status by just over nine points) and among the Maltese (just over three points). By contrast, religion has a differential impact among immigrants, although the only two effects which are statistically significant indicate that higher levels of religious commitment or affiliation result in reduced status—a finding contrary to our expectations.

15 The only exception is the Vietnamese, where there is a minor positive value for extrinsic values.

Table 11: The Influence of Work Values and Religion on Migratory Mobility[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese	
Work values						
Intrinsic	.47	(.11)	.51	(.12)	.44	(.10)
Extrinsic	-.46	(-.08)	-.34	(-.07)	.05	(.01)
Family networks						
Parents in Australia	3.4*	(.09)	.34	(.01)	9.1*	(.17)
Siblings in Australia	.28	(.06)	-.04	(-.01)	-.58	(-.07)
Religion values						
Importance of religion	-8.9*	(-.17)	.03	(.06)	-.38	(-.01)
Catholic	4.9	(.07)				
Muslim	na		-4.5*	(-.15)		
Buddhist	na		na		-1.0	(-.03)
Control variables						
Father's occupation	.06	(.07)	-.14*	(-.17)	.03	(.04)
Schooling	1.2*	(.18)	.10	(.03)	-.39	(-.05)
Qualifications	8.1*	(.25)	5.9*	(.18)	8.3*	(.22)
Refugee	na		na		1.2	(.02)
Length of residence	-.01	(-.01)	-.02	(-.01)	-.57	(-.08)
English proficiency	-5.6*	(-.10)	-2.9	(-.06)	4.2	(.07)
Constant	12.3		27.2		22.9	
R-squared (adjusted)	.12		.03		.05	
N	241		222		240	

* p<.05, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's first job in Australia, The analyses are restricted to those who had a job prior to migration and a first job in Australia. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

These results for migratory mobility are broadly in line with the analyses already reported. In those analyses, the process of migration appears to result in a uniform decrease in job status, to about the same status level for all immigrants, regardless of their inherited or human capital. Since inherited or human capital appears to play little part in either downward or upward migratory mobility, it is perhaps not surprisingly that cultural capital—values, networks and religion—also have a comparatively minor role in the process. The act of migration has a major impact on job status, and is largely independent from the resources that the individual can bring to bear—whether inherited, human or cultural.

The results for career mobility are shown in Table 12. In these models, the effects are significantly stronger, although this is at least partly a consequence of including first job in Australia as a control variable. The strongest and most consistent influence is intrinsic work

values. Those who score highly on this scale—who value initiative, responsibility among the things in their work—are more likely to experience upward career mobility. With the exception of the Vietnamese, the actual effects on mobility are remarkably consistent, ranging from 1.9 status points gained for each additional point on the value scale for the Maltese, to 1.3 points for the Lebanese, net of other things. In each of these groups, stronger endorsement of extrinsic values reduces mobility, as we would expect, though the effects are of lesser importance when compared to intrinsic values. To place the importance of intrinsic work values in perspective, for the Maltese possessing stronger intrinsic work values is almost twice as important as first job status in determining current job status (standardised coefficients of .39 and .22, respectively). Among the Lebanese, intrinsic values are second in importance to first job status, but twice as important as any of the other variables in the model.

Table 12: The Influences of Work Values, Family Networks and Religion on Career Mobility[a]

	Maltese		Lebanese		Vietnamese	
Work values						
Intrinsic	1.9*	(.39)	1.3*	(.28)	.22	(.05)
Extrinsic	-1.4*	(-.22)	-.59*	(-.10)	.09	(.02)
Family networks						
Parents in Australia	1.1	(.03)	1.3	(.03)	4.8	(.09)
Siblings in Australia	.86*	(.05)	.30	(.05)	-.22	(-.03)
Religious values						
Importance of religion	-4.5	(-.08)	6.4*	(.09)	-2.1	(-.05)
Catholic	6.9*	(1.10)	na		na	
Muslim	na		-4.2	(-.12)	na	
Buddhist	na		na		-1.9	(-.06)
Control variables						
Father's occupation	.10*	(.11)	.07	(.08)	.01	(.02)
Schooling	-.09	(-.01)	-.08	(-.02)	-.12	(-.02)
Qualifications	5.3*	(.15)	5.6*	(.15)	5.8*	(.15)
Refugee	na		na		3.4	(.05)
Length of residence	-.10	(-.05)	.14	(.06)	.66*	(.09)
English proficiency	-.19	(-.01)	2.7	(.05)	-2.7	(-.04)
First Australian occupation	.24*	(.22)	.41*	(.37)	.66*	(.64)
Constant	16.8		2.1		3.6	
R-squared (adjusted)	.25		.27		.49	
N	246		223		245	

* p<.05, one-tailed.

a The dependent variable is the occupational status of the respondent's current job in Australia. The analyses are restricted to those who had a current job in Australia. Figures are partial regression coefficients and (in parentheses) standardised regression coefficients.

Source: As for Table 2.

The remaining effects in Table 12 are comparatively minor. The presence of parents for all groups produces upward career mobility, though none are statistically significant. Having siblings who are in Australia also increases status, except for the Vietnamese, though again none of the effects are statistically significant. Once again, the effects for religious commitment vary between the birthplace groups. However, in the case of the two significant effects, increased religious commitment or affiliation results in higher job status.

These results provide additional clues to understanding the factors which impact on social mobility for immigrants. Work values do emerge as of considerable importance in determining who will do well in Australia in terms of occupational status, and who will not. The objection could, of course, be made by these values are correlated with jobs—those in higher status jobs express intrinsic values, while those in lower status job express extrinsic values. Our effects would, therefore, simply be measuring who had moved up or down the status scale. The only means of addressing this question definitively is through panel data, which are not available here. However, research on work values has suggested that they are formed early in the working career, or even earlier in childhood and adolescence, and change little during the course of a person's life (Herzberg *et al*, 1959; Russell, 1976). We might reasonably assume, then, that it is the values which are influencing mobility, and not mobility which is influencing values.

The presence of family members in Australia also serves to enhance job status, with family members presumably providing a wider social network and therefore wide job possibilities for those who wish to increase the occupational status. The effects are, however, considerably less than those for work values, and it may be that family networks have their most important role in helping a member to secure employment if they are without work, as other research has suggested (McAllister, 1986a). The influence of religion is anomalous: to the extent that there is any impact, it is to decrease the status of the first job, but increase the status of the current job. Since religion is a cultural attribute, for first job religion may simply be reflecting the individual's level of assimilation into Australian society. For example, newly arrived migrants with a strong religious commitment may be less assimilated and therefore less attractive to Australian employers. Later in their occupational careers, however, religion may well be less an indicator of cultural values than of social resources, as we originally hypothesised—hence its positive impact on occupational status.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Traditional studies of social mobility have (a) tended to use a small range of variables, usually reflecting inherited and human capital and (b) compared the status of occupations at limited timepoints. In each case, applying these social mobility models to immigrants is problematic. By analysing survey data collected among Maltese, Lebanese and Vietnamese immigrants in 1988–89, this report has identified some of the factors which contribute to economic success within Australia. More specifically, we have examined an additional type of social mobility—migratory mobility—and added a range of cultural variables to these measuring inherited, human capital. The results suggest three major conclusions.

First, the act of migration in the individual's life represents a major disruption to a working career, with immigrants being reduced to a common level of job status in their early years of settlement, regardless of their inherited capital, individual achievements or cultural background. As we would expect from such a major disruption, migratory mobility—a comparison of last job before migration with first job in Australia—has little impact on subsequent career mobility. This suggests that the factors which influence first occupation in Australia have little to do with skills or experience than with a process of socioeconomic levelling which is induced by migration. By implication, it suggests that government policies or attempts at enhancing occupational in these early years will have relatively little impact: the single determining factor is the act of migration itself, and the associated disruption and problems it causes to the individual's working life.[16]

A second conclusion is that once immigrants arrive in Australia and commence work, the patterns of mobility are broadly similar for the birthplace groups albeit with some significant differences as well. For example, family inheritance is of less importance in determining status than individual achievements, a finding which also holds for the Australian born control group. To the extent that there are systematic biases or structural disadvantages placed in the way of immigrants achieving upward mobility, it is in the form of individuals receiving fewer rewards for primary or secondary education gained

16 We are, of course, dealing only with status among those who are employed. A separate question concerns unemployment in these early years of settlement, where government policy can have significant impact through labour market programs. See Jones and McAllister (1991).

overseas and for qualifications awarded overseas. This is particularly the case when immigrants have just arrived in Australia, when they lack of labour force experience and their educational attainments therefore take on more significance for potential employers.

Finally, the results provide additional clues to understanding the factors above and beyond inherited and human capital which impact on mobility for immigrants. Among the possible cultural factors which influence mobility, work values emerge as by far the most important. To the extent that individuals rate the intrinsic aspects of work, they experience increased upward mobility compared to those who place less value on them, net of other things. This finding holds for the Maltese and the Lebanese, but not for the Vietnamese. The clear implication is that for most immigrants, individual motivation plays a significant role in the process of status attainment.

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